

REGION 6 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

TOPIC: San Jacinto River Waste Pits

DATE: July 21, 2015

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PURPOSE/ACTION NEEDED: Information for Regional Administrator's August Speaking Engagements in Austin, TX

DEADLINE DATE: Ongoing – for information purpose only

BACKGROUND:

- Site consists of former waste pits used for disposal of paper mill wastes containing dioxins.
- The pits are located at the San Jacinto River & I-10, Channelview, Harris County, TX.
- In July 2011 the Potentially Responsible Parties (PRPs) completed a removal action to install a cap over the waste pits to prevent further releases to the San Jacinto River.

CURRENT STATUS:

- The EPA met with partner agencies (TCEQ, Harris County, and Port of Houston) on June 11, 2015, to discuss sampling to determine whether the cap and sediments are leaking dioxins into the San Jacinto River.
- Following input/discussions, EPA prepared a draft sampling scope & sent it to partner agencies July 17, 2015 for review. The final scope will be sent to the PRPs for preparation of a sampling plan.
- The draft Corps of Engineers report to evaluate cleanup alternatives is expected in July 2015. This report will be sent to partner agencies for review/comment. The final Corps report will be used to complete the Feasibility Study.
- Anticipate completion of RI/FS and issuing Record of Decision in September 2016.

ENVIRONMENTAL/PUBLIC HEALTH CONCERNS:

- On June 19, 2015, the Texas Department of State Health Services released its report, "Assessment of the Occurrence of Cancer in East Harris County, Texas, 1995-2012."
- TDSHS then formed a panel to review cancers identified and evaluate whether follow-up epidemiologic study is feasible. The panel includes internal and external experts in epidemiology, oncology, and toxicology, as well as a citizen to represent the community's interest and EPA. The first call will be July 24, 2015.

TECHNICAL CONCERNS:

- Whether dioxin is migrating from the waste pits and underlying sediment into the San Jacinto River. Past sampling did not indicate any, but several storms have occurred since the last sampling events

REGULATORY/LEGAL REQUIREMENTS:

- Requirements of the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality, Port of Houston, Army Corps of Engineers, Harris County, and others may apply depending on the final remedy selected.
- Special Clean Water Act permit area regarding dredging and disposal in vicinity of Site.

COMMUNITY CONCERNS:

- Contamination of river and fish in the entire watershed.
- The EPA co-leads a Site Community Advisory Committee including the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality, Harris County, the Port of Houston, Houston Galveston Area Council, the Galveston Bay Foundation, and the Potentially Responsible Parties. This committee meets every few months regarding progress at the Site and community issues.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Continue to work with partner agencies on the sampling plans.
- Use the Corps of Engineers report to inform a revised Feasibility Study



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